CLOSEOUT FOR M94060025

On June 6, 1994, [redacted] a program officer [redacted] brought an allegation of misconduct in science to OIG's attention. The complainant was [redacted] a faculty member [redacted] The complainant received for review NSF proposal [redacted] entitled [redacted] which was submitted by the subject, [redacted] who was a faculty member [redacted] The complainant alleged that the subject had misappropriated ideas related to [redacted] (the topic area) in her NSF proposal that were unique to a postdoctoral fellow. The complainant explained that the subject should have contacted the postdoctoral fellow to ask for permission to use his ideas.

OIG contacted the complainant who identified the postdoctoral fellow [redacted]. The complainant explained that the postdoctoral fellow and the subject had previously worked together in the same research group. The complainant told OIG that he had not discussed the allegation with the postdoctoral fellow.

OIG contacted the postdoctoral fellow who confirmed that he and the subject had worked together for about a year as a part of a laboratory research group and that he had developed, in cooperation with the research group, ideas and experiments in the topic area. He said that the subject had the right to use these ideas in any way she wanted and did not need to ask for his permission to do so because these ideas were a composite of material published in the literature and further developed in group discussions and, therefore, were not unique to him.

The postdoctoral fellow said that some of the ideas that he and the group had developed were part of his NSF funded fellowship proposal [redacted] He explained that he never pursued these ideas because he had changed his research direction. OIG noted that the subject's and the postdoctoral fellow's proposals contained several similar experiments, and concluded that the similarities were the result of their mutual research interests and group discussions.

OIG could find no evidence that the ideas presented in the subject's proposal were unique to the postdoctoral fellow and concluded that there was no substance to the allegation that the subject had misappropriated ideas into his NSF proposal.

This inquiry was closed and no further action will be taken.

cc: Staff Scientist, Deputy AIG-Oversight, AIG-Oversight, IG